THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GRORGE FERNANDES):- (a) Some representations have been received against the use of explosives in North Sikkim Highway at Rafamkhola. In this regard it is stated that huge boulders had blocked the above road. Since these boulders could not be moved mechanically, controlled blasting was done to open the important road.

(b) and (c) BRO have been informed about the importance of preservation of ecology and environment and instructed to take all possible measures to minimise the use of explosives.

Firing incidents of Indo-Pak border

2661. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of firing incidents on Indo-Pak border during the last six months;

(b) the number of persons killed and property damaged; and

(c) the measures taken to protect the lives and property of persons residing in border areas?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) During the six month period from June to Nov. 1998 there were 182 incidents of exchange of fire on the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL). 1822 incidents on the Line of Control (LOC) and 175 incidents on the International Border (IB) in J&K. On Pak side 611 persons were reportedly killed/wounded. On our side 67 security personnel and 34 civilians were killed. Two hundred Seventy three security personnel and 116 civilians were wounded.

In so far as the border in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat is concerned there were 3 incidents of unprovoked firing from Pak Rangers, in which one BSF personnel was killed and two were injured.

The Indian Army respc appropriately to any firing initiated Pakistan. Enemy weapon systems suppressed neutralised by effective from our guns. Further, with a view protecting the civilian population the c administration provide shelters bunkers and various schemes.

Fire and accidents at DRDO, Oriss

2662. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: W the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased state:

(a) the reasons for the fire accidents Chandipur Defence Research a Development Organisation in Orrisa.

(b) whether the matter has be investigated; and

(c) if so, the action taken against t persons involved in the fire accidents'

THE MINISTER OF DEFENC (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (The cause of the fire was auto-ignition experimental propellant due to chemic deterioration.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply part (a).

Steps to make Navy self-sufficient

2663. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENC be pleased to state:

(a) whether Navy is entirely depende on foreign sources for submarines; an

(b) if so, the steps taken to make th Navy self-sufficient?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENC (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a and (b) Mazagon Dock Limited Mumb has constructed two submarines wit some material and equipment obtaine from foreign sources. Various steps hav been taken towards production c submarines in India. Steps have also bee taken to indigenise various component

628 RS F3